



FAVA BEANS, PLUM TOMATOES AND PASTA

This joyously bright vegetarian main or side dish bursts with color, flavor and nutrition. The fava beans must be prepared before final cooking. So allow ample time for that soothing, therapeutic task.

- 2 pounds fresh fava beans in the shell
- 1 Tblsp. Olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 Cup dry white wine, vegetable stock, or water
- 2 plum tomatoes, cored and chopped
- 2 tsp. Arrowroot
- 2 Tblsp vegetable stock or water
- 1 pound cooked rotini, spirelli, or orecchiette ("little ear") pasta
- 1 ounce Parmigiano-Reggiano or dry Jack cheese, optional

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1. To prepare fava beans, remove beans from shells and discard shells. Bring a small saucepan of water to a boil and add beans. Cook 30 seconds, drain, and rinse in cold water. When beans are cool enough to handle, slit one side of each bean and pop out the bean inside. Repeat with remaining beans. You should have about 1/2 cup of beans when you are done. Set aside the beans.
2. Heat a large skillet or wok over medium-high heat and add oil. Add garlic and cook 30 seconds to 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add beans and cook 2 minutes. Add wine and tomatoes and cook 3 to 5 minutes, or until tomatoes begin to lose their shape, stirring occasionally.
3. In a small mixing bowl, stir together arrowroot and vegetable stock. Remove skillet from heat and add arrowroot slurry. Stir well and return to heat. Cook 1 minute more.
4. Remove skillet from heat and add pasta, tossing well to mix pasta and bean mixture.
5. To serve, divide pasta and sauce among individual plates. If desired, using a clean, dry vegetable peeler, peel curls of cheese over pasta.

Serves 4 as a main dish; 8 as a side dish.

From Braiden Rex-Johnson, author of "Inside the Pike Place Market"

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